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General Assembly
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Agenda item 5
Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Sixty-third year

Identical letters dated 20 October 2008 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

In the light of recent developments, I am compelled to once again draw your attention to the vastly destructive consequences of Israel's ongoing illegal settlement campaign in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, particularly acts of Israeli settler terrorism against Palestinian civilians.

This pernicious settlement campaign, which is being carried out by Israel, the occupying Power, in grave breach of international humanitarian law, continues to obstruct efforts to advance the peace process as it continues to undermine and fragment the territorial contiguity, integrity and unity of the Palestinian territory and also continues to gravely affect the lives of the Palestinian civilian population in numerous aspects. Not only are the Palestinian people continuously subjected to the confiscation of their land, demolition of their homes, the imposition of severe and discriminatory restrictions on movement and residence for the direct intention of facilitating Israel's unlawful settlement and wall construction and expansion in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, particularly in and around East Jerusalem, they continue also to be tormented by Israeli settlers that have been illegally transferred to the Occupied Territory and that act with depraved lawlessness towards the Palestinian civilian population.

In this regard, I regret to inform you that Israeli settler violence and terrorism against the Palestinian people is increasing in a scope and scale as armed, extremist settlers have intensified their destructive rampage against Palestinian civilians and their properties in recent days. The latest incidents have involved a series of attacks by Israeli settlers against Palestinians attempting to harvest their olive crops. As in the past, this annual olive harvest, upon which thousands of Palestinian families are dependent for their livelihood, is being jeopardized by settler violence against Palestinian farmers and their families, many of whose olive groves are located on lands near illegal Israeli settlements.

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The most recent incident took place in an area near the West Bank city of Al-Khalil (Hebron), which has often been plagued by settler terror and high tension and volatility between the 650 extremist settlers transferred to the area and the more than 150,000 Palestinian civilians living there, whose existence, human dignity and well-being is under constant threat from the terror of these settlers. On Saturday, 18 October, Israeli settlers descended upon Palestinian olive harvesters in Tal Al-Rumeidah. As Israeli soldiers looked on, the settlers attacked the harvesters and also attacked foreign peace activists who had come to provide protection to the farmers and journalists and photographers in the area, beating and injuring several of them. Rather than arresting the settlers for these crimes or acting in a decisive manner to bring a halt to such settler violence, the Israeli occupying forces declared the area a "closed military zone", bringing instead a halt to the olive harvest, thus endangering the livelihoods of the many people depending on that harvest for sustenance and income and punishing instead the Palestinian people rather than the criminal settlers.

This incident proves once again that the impunity of the Israeli settlers is directly abetted by the Israeli occupying forces, which typically stand idly by allowing settlers to harass, intimidate, terrorize and attack Palestinians and their lands and properties with no legal consequence for their actions and no protection for the innocent civilians. Even when they murder Palestinian civilians, such as the recent killing of a young Palestinian shepherd in late September, Israeli settlers are rarely held accountable for their crimes and enjoy virtually complete immunity from the law. In this regard, we must state clearly that Israel, the occupying Power, is responsible for the actions of the settlers it has transferred to the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, in grave breach of the Fourth Geneva Convention, and it must be held accountable.

In this connection, I must also draw your attention to an escalation in Israeli shootings and killing of Palestinian civilians, including civilians protesting the recent settler violence. In the past week, three Palestinians, Abdel Qader Zeid, 17 years old, Mohammad Jamal Al-Ramahi, 21 years old, and Abdel Aziz B'eirat, 20 years old, were killed by the occupying forces in the Ramallah area amidst rising confrontations and tension between settlers, particularly from the "Beit El" settlement, and the Palestinian civilian population in the surrounding communities. These killings, in addition to routine Israeli firing upon Palestinians demonstrating against other illegal occupation practices such as the continued construction of the wall, create only greater tension, instability and mistrust, undermining efforts to promote calm, law and order and to advance the peace process.

Such current developments remind us again how gravely Israel's illegal settlements and their inhabitants threaten the future prospects for peace. The international community must remain firm in its condemnation and rejection of Israel's illegal settlement campaign in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and must continue demanding that Israel, the occupying Power, abide by all of its obligations in this regard under international humanitarian law, United Nations resolutions and the Quartet's road map. At the same time, the international community must call upon Israel to take immediate action to bring about a cessation of all acts of settler violence and terror against Palestinian civilians, These are requisites for upholding the law, promoting calm and salvaging the peace process.

The present letter is in follow-up to our previous 319 letters to you regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, since 28 September 2000. Those letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 29 September 2008 (A/ES-10/423-S/2008/629), constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all these war crimes, State terrorism and systematic human rights violations committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators must be brought to justice.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter and its annex distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Riyad **Mansour**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer

Annex to the identical letters dated 20 October 2008 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

Names of martyrs killed by the Israeli occupying forces in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem* (from Wednesday, 18 June 2008, to Thursday, 16 October 2008)

Wednesday, 18 June 2008

Rami Abu Swaireh

Monday, 23 June 2008

1. Iyad Radwan Khanfar
2. Tareq Jumaa' Abu Ghali

Sunday, 29 June 2008

Mohammad Nasser Daraghma (17 years old)

Wednesday, 9 July 2008

Talal Saeed Abed

Thursday, 10 July 2008

Saleem Jumaa' Al-Humaidi (18 years old)

Friday, 11 July 2008

Mahmoud Othman Assi

Saturday, 26 July 2008

Shihab El-Din Al-Natsha

Tuesday, 29 July 2008

Ahmad Hossam Moussa (9 years old)

Monday, 4 August 2008

Youssef Ahmad Aa'mira (18 years old)

Wednesday, 10 September 2008

Waleed Fareed Fraitakh

Saturday, 13 September 2008

Hassan Mohammad Abd Hmaid (16 years old)

* The total number of Palestinian martyrs killed by the Israeli occupying forces since 28 September 2000 is 5,279.

Saturday, 20 September 2008

1. Miriam Ahmad Ali
2. Shuhaib Yasser Saleh (14 years old)

Saturday, 27 September 2008

Yehya Bani Meniya (18 years old)

Tuesday, 14 October 2008

Abdel Qader Zeid (17 years old)

Wednesday, 15 October 2008

Mohammad Jamal Al-Ramahi

Thursday, 16 October 2008

Abdel Aziz B'eirat